

Special Update

Oregon Resource Conservation & Development Councils

*Building rural community sustainability in Oregon by
conserving & developing natural resources*



Oregon's Resource Conservation & Development Councils:

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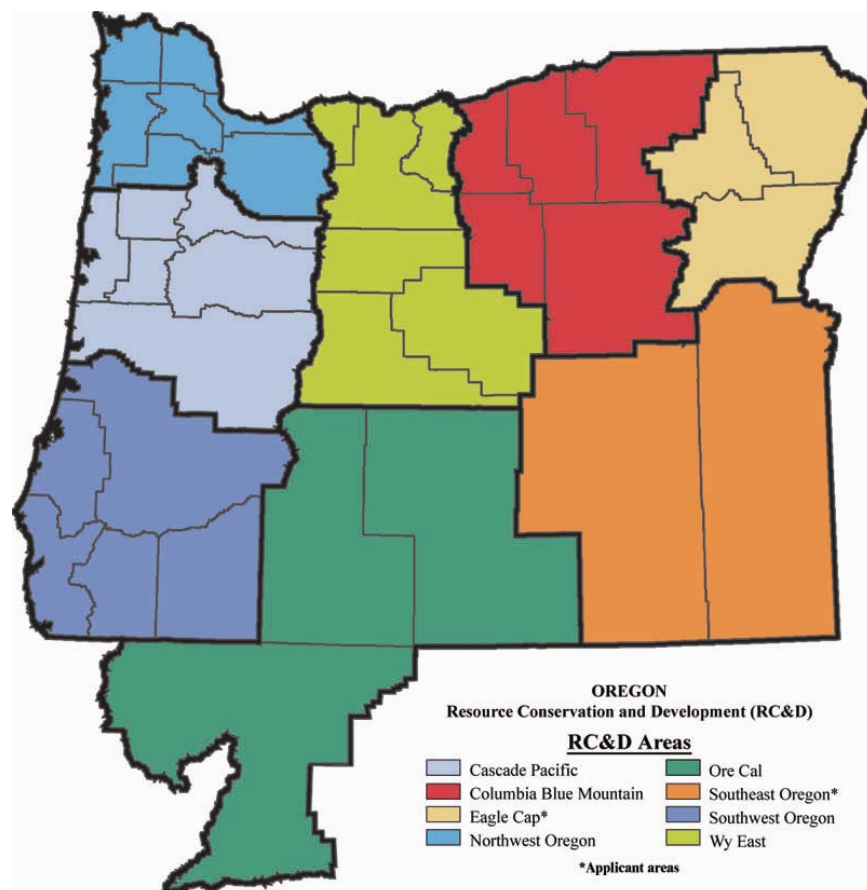
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Oregon's Resource Conservation & Development Councils are making good things happen across the state.

Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D Councils) are local people working together to plan and carry out activities to make their communities better places to live. RC&D Councils are made up of community leaders and volunteers who evaluate local opportunities to address needs through partnerships and collaboration. RC&D Councils promote stewardship and conservation of natural resources, improvements in economic opportunities and the development of sustainable communities.

Each Council has a unique composition, develops its own bylaws and forms an independent nonprofit organization. Together the group defines issues and interests of mutual concern for its region. Working with a wide range of partners they are able to craft innovative projects and implement long-lasting solutions.

USDA provides technical assistance to these volunteer-based groups through the Resources Conservation and Development Program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. In Oregon, five RC&D Councils have been authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture and currently receive support from the USDA/RC&D program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Two councils are in developmental stages and have pending applications to join the program.



Accomplishments: Conservation & Stewardship

Getting the word out!

Oregon had a very successful campaign of sign-ups for the USDA Conservation Security Program and RC&D Councils were part of the Oregon team putting this rewarding program on the ground. Working with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Natural Resources Conservation Service offices, Councils took on the critical role of outreach. Using their unique approach, RC&D Councils contacted a wide array of partners and employed the full range of outreach methods to get the word out to potential candidates for this program. Facilitating informational meetings, advertising and outreach campaigns, the RC&D Councils helped bring in eligible, well-informed landowners to the signup process.



Conservation Security Program workshop Yamhill County

Oregon boasted excellent results. The word got out! People attended workshops, called in and eventually many eligible candidates signed up. Big rewards for great stewardship was the result for more than 75% of Oregon's 719 enrollees. These Oregon farmers and ranchers received over \$19 million dollars in payments for their superior stewardship last year and most contracts have the potential to continue paying out similar amounts over the next 10 years.

Improving Livestock Systems



Twelve livestock producers in northeastern Oregon have applied a range of methods to deal with animal waste and serve as demonstration sites. The methods will help ranchers stay in compliance with water quality regulations, improve fish habitat and maintain the livestock operations in a profitable environment. A tour of the completed facilities served to introduce the methods to a larger public. Columbia Blue Mountain RC&D Council provided administration and was an active participant in establishing these demonstration sites.

Accomplishments: Forestry and Habitat Restoration

Fox Creek Volunteers Mend Stream



Fox Creek, City of Rainier.

With a helping hand from the Northwest Oregon RC&D Council, the Friends of Fox Creek have restored unstable banks near Riverfront Park in Columbia County. With the right engineering, top soil and plant materials, the volunteers were able to complete a successful restoration project, slow erosion and improve water quality and habitat.

National Fire Plan Funds Utilization Study

Uses for small diameter timber in southwestern Oregon were studied and examined through feasibility analysis. The most promising included: biomass to energy, specialized product manufacturing, ton-wood usage (i.e., firewood), and a medium-scale sawmill and kiln drying facility. It was further suggested that an integrated network offered the most promise for overcoming the high cost of harvesting and handling raw material.



A Forest

Landowner Resource

Guide was developed and distributed to the more than 4000 private forest landowners in Jackson and Josephine Counties. The guide provides forest management information, contractor listings and other resources to encourage good stewardship, promote forest health and reduce damage from forest fires. The project was sponsored and implemented by Southwest Oregon RC&D Council.

Restoration with USDA Forest Service

Cascade Pacific RC&D is in the seventh year of implementing the Coastal Initiative partnership with the Siuslaw National Forest. This year work is centered on the Siuslaw Stewardship Group which oversees the reinvestment of a portion of local stewardship harvest receipts. Working together, these interested individuals and organizations encourage thoughtful and creative approaches to natural resources issues. Approximately \$210,000 of stewardship receipts was allocated to 11 on-the-ground restoration projects valued at over \$640,000.

Criteria ensure projects: (1) promote sustainable use and enhancement of natural resources in the Siuslaw River Basin and Coastal Lakes, (2) promote natural resource management based on recent data and sound science, and (3) benefit public lands and resources. Stewardship projects include riparian planting, fencing, in-stream structures, culvert repair or replacement, wetlands restoration, noxious weed control, and habitat improvement.

Accomplishments: Sustainable Agriculture

Farm and Ranch Tours Promote Best Management

Eagle Cap Applicant Council combined forces with local agricultural organizations to sponsor three tours. One tour in Forest Capital looked at weeds and how to manage them through rotational grazing, fencing to protect riparian areas and how they eradicated specific weed species. The second tour in Union County focused on blue-grass seed, sugar beets and water quality improvements implemented by producers. Animal predators were also discussed. The last tour in Baker County looked at a pipeline built to provide drinking water for livestock for 17 different ranch operations. The tour offered the chance to see many different options for equipment and conveyance.

Integrated Fruit Production is a win-win

Growers can't say enough good things about the 105 weather stations and the website that helps them implement best orchard practices in North-central Oregon. The program gives them the most current local information on weather conditions in order to make good choices about spraying for pests and diseases. The package has also included training on other methods to minimize potential harmful impacts of spraying through buffers, choice of chemicals, etc. The growers are finding the tools enable them to save money, labor, equipment and supplies in addition to protecting the environment and helping to ensure a quality product.

The award-winning project is sponsored by Wy'East RC&D Council and partners.

Interest in Direct Marketing

Cascade Pacific RC&D helped to present a workshop on Farm Direct Marketing. The session drew over 50 people from across the state. The top areas of interest included livestock processing facilities or mobile slaughter, agricultural education/outreach, farmer's markets, and construction and operational grants and loans for direct marketing projects.

Oregon City Farmers Market

The Northwest Oregon RC&D Council is assisting the Oregon City community with their new Farmer's Market initiative. Council President, Ginny Van Loo, working with the City, County, local Chamber, Extension Service & Soil & Water Conservation District, assisted local producers to secure a site and connect growers with consumers for the first Oregon City Farmers Market. The RC&D will continue to assist by identifying grant funding sources for capacity building to increase marketing & outreach opportunities and support market operations.



Accomplishments: Heritage and Tourism

Preserving Golden National Historic District

A small group of volunteers has spent ten years reclaiming a mining area and now aim to preserve the ghost town where the miners lived. Southwest Oregon RC&D Council helped to get the town on the National Register of Historic Places and continues to help with interpretation and site development.

The Oregon State Parks Commission recently voted to purchase the town, making it a State



Replacing the foundation of the Golden church

seasonal visitor center.

Park and providing for long term stability and security of this heritage resource. The volunteers plan to become an official Friends group, coordinating local interpretation and activities. The State Parks department has completed a site evaluation and proposed a two-phase plan of nearly \$1 million to stabilize buildings, provide parking, interpretation and a

The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial

Celebrations along the Columbia River included a flotilla of canoes and kayaks, a living history village, and kiosks in eight locations. Columbia Blue Mountain RC&D Council was an active partner in planning and implementation for these events and activities.



Lewis and Clark Bicentennial

Josephine County Heritage Days

A local bank sponsored a community celebration of heritage that motivated folks to get out and see what the area had to offer. Southwest Oregon RC&D Council worked with partners at Golden to make it one of three sites on a one day tour and mobile festival. Living History Players, weddings, special postal cancellations and other festivities were made available free to more than 700 participants.

In preparation for the event, the classic church was given a new foundation and improved internal support system for the steeple. That stabilization work will ensure the landmark is preserved for future generations.



Living History Players at Golden.

Accomplishments: Noxious Weed Control

NW Oregon Invasive Weed Management Partnership

Controlling invasive weeds may seem like a never ending battle, but the NOIWM Partnership is making strong headway. Current efforts are focused on Japanese Knotweed, a



Japanese Knotweed flourishing in the Willamette Valley

riparian invader that crowds out native plants along streams. Since knotweed spreads downstream, initial work focuses on headwaters, as well as locations where the weed is well established. The partnership includes over 80 organizations, representing federal, state, and local government, non-profits and businesses concerned about invasive weed issues. The NOIWM Partnership has developed a strategic plan and employs a program coordinator. The

northwest corner of Oregon is now covered with the establishment of five new Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA) thanks to collaborative efforts by Cascade Pacific and Northwest Oregon RC&D Councils. The CWMA's will develop plans to eradicate priority weeds and conduct education outreach.

Cascade Pacific participates on a steering committee, which provides direction for the Partnership and the coordinator. Over the past year, the NOIWM Partnership entered into 15 agreements with Soil and Water Conservation Districts and watershed councils to inventory and control knotweed in cooperation with private landowners. To date, inventories have been completed on 3,900 acres, 422 stream miles, and 887 road miles. Knotweed has been identified on 330 acres and 218 acres of knotweed have been



The North Coast Cooperative Weed Management Area Meeting.

Activities:

- Southwest Oregon Council is forming a regional weed coordinating group to share ideas about what works and create effective partnerships in the battle against weeds. The effort is helping to get some counties more up to speed and create advisory boards where none have existed before.
- Southeast Oregon Applicant Council is working with partners to supply backpack sprayers to inmate crews to treat more weeds cost effectively.

Accomplishments: Leadership and Capacity Development

Activities and Projects

- **Grant Writing Workshop:** Through a partnership with Community Systems (Bozeman, MT), Wy'East RC&D sponsored an intensive four day grant writing workshop in Sunriver, November 2005. This workshop was attended by 31 participants.
- **Deschutes Consensus Institute:** Wy'East RC&D is working to build community capacity to resolve conflict, find consensus and further collaboration on natural resource issues in the Deschutes Basin. Funding was sought in 2004 to hold Consensus Institutes, which provide individualized training and facilitation to resolve conflict among constituents in the Deschutes Basin.
- **Supporting partners:** Southeast Oregon RC&D Applicant Council is building capacity and awareness in the local community by promoting the ongoing efforts of other local organizations with letters of support for projects that correspond to needs and opportunities they also embrace.
- **Community Outreach and Needs Assessment:** The rural community town of Juntura was the site of a community needs assessment. With the help of Southeast Oregon RC&D Applicant Council, they identified some important issues related to trucking, water quality and community infrastructure.

Awards and achievements in Oregon RC&D community

- **Tony Hyde, Northwest Oregon RC&D:** Outstanding Performance by a Council Member-awarded by National Association of RC&D Councils.
- **Northwest Oregon RC&D Council:** Outstanding Performance by a Council by the Pacific Rim Regional Association of RC&D Councils recognizing their accomplishments and delivering an effective RC&D program.



Bob Graham, NRCS and Ginny Van Loo, Northwest Oregon RC&D

- **Northwest Oregon RC&D:** Regional and National Earth Team Volunteer Award: in 2005, 116 volunteers contributed 2713 hours volunteer time to RC&D projects.

- **Bob Jones, Southwest Oregon:** Elected President, Pacific Rim Regional RC&D Association.



- **Lucie La Bonté, Southwest Oregon:** Elected President Oregon Association of RC&D Councils. Pictured below are members of the OARCD Executive Committee: Lucie La Bonté, Lance Phillips and Lyell Gardner.



Accomplishments: Water Quality and Watershed Management

Search for understanding in Klamath Basin

Numerous large workshops have been held to work on solutions to the problem of competing interests of fish and agriculture in the Klamath Basin. Ore-Cal RC&D Council co-sponsored trainings for local stakeholders to learn consensus building methods that could be applied in the ongoing dialogue. As a result, 5 stakeholder workshops were held in local areas to facilitate dialogue among interest groups and allow more than 180 participants to speak and be heard. Short and long term visions were developed and future actions have been identified to help achieve the visions and enhance the sense of community within the Basin.



Project Planning session in Klamath

Water Optimization Project

Wy'East RC&D Council worked with local and state-level partners to secure funds through the Conservation Innovation Program to develop and test methods to optimize irrigation in areas where water has become scarce for farming purposes. The project began in 2005.



Listening to the vision at Somes Bar

Sub-Basin Planning

In 2004, Wy'East RC&D Council provided outreach for watershed planning, including recruitment of stakeholders and general publicity about the planning process. The Deschutes Coordinating Group is made up of local organizations working together to create a plan for natural resources in the Deschutes River Basin, where there is a rapid population increase and growing development pressures on natural resources. This plan prioritizes actions necessary for planning, funding and implementing changes that will improve Deschutes Basin natural resources.



Accomplishments: Regional Planning & Citizen Involvement

Citizen Group Focuses on Salmon

The Northwest Oregon RC&D Council worked with Clackamas Soil & Water Conservation District to form the Greater Oregon City Watershed Council. A steering committee developed bylaws, mission, purpose and goal statements and identified geographic areas for representation. Watershed Council members were appointed to take on the leadership for the new organization.



Greater Oregon City Watershed Council steering committee.

Community Fire Planning

Wildfire-prone neighborhoods are organizing and coordinating with Federal land managers to reduce risk. Northwest Oregon Council is working with Clackamas Stewardship partners to form a collaborative, which will implement stewardship contracting in National Forests, fuel reduction and the Fire Wise Program.

Southwest Oregon RC&D administers grant funds and provides facilitation and assistance with group activities in a region considered the “most fire prone” in the state. Neighborhoods are developing their own plans and cooperating on fuels reduction projects which cover larger acreages. Private efforts are being effectively coordinated with work on Federal lands with a goal of treating over 200 acres in the highest risk Wildland Urban

Groundwater Management Needed to Reduce Nitrate in the Region

The Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area Committee is a 16-member group representing a wide array of interests and stakeholders. The committee’s charge is to recommend strategies to lower nitrate concentrations in the groundwater. Four subcommittees comprised of both committee members and other interested parties are drafting strategies for agriculture, public water systems, residential, and industrial/commercial land uses. The subcommittees are conducting public outreach as part of their work.

The process calls for the committee to approve the work of the subcommittees and fold recommendations into one action plan. The schedule calls for the committee to forward a draft action plan to DEQ around the summer of 2006.



Accomplishments: Renewable Energy

On-farm Micro-Hydroelectric Generation

On the path to self sufficiency, the Gundermans found a way to make the electric company their customer and sell them power. With the assistance of the Northwest Oregon RC&D Council, the landowner worked through the licensing and permitting process with fifteen local, state, and federal agencies to install an on-farm hydroelectric generating station on his own farm..

The installed system runs with water from two high lakes on the farm and uses two

twin nozzle wheel turbines. The system is expected to generate 96,000 KWH of electricity per year, enough to supply approximately eight typical Oregon homes. The system is wired directly into McMinnville Water & Light transmission lines. Two KWH meters measure grid energy to the farm and hydro energy to the utility grid. Electricity generated is credited by the utility through a net metering agreement.



Lucian Gunderman with 30 KW, three-phase generator.

Summit Ridge Wind Project

With funding from a USDA Value-Added Producer Grant, 23 ranchers and farmers completed a feasibility study and business plan to develop a completely farmer-owned ten megawatt wind farm.



Based on the success in summit Ridge, five dry-land farmers in Sherman County have also requested Wy'East help them apply for Value-added producer grants to evaluate the feasibility of a community wind project. These projects have the potential to bring important financial resources into these counties and to provide renewable clean energy for Oregon and the Northwest.

Biomass Utilization and Wind Considered

Southwest Oregon Council is participating in discussion with local groups looking into the possibility of using the large quantity of biomass available from federal forest and private forest lands to generate electricity in the inland areas. Coastal residents are exploring the feasibility of wind power on the coast. A forum was sponsored to provide coastal residents scientific information about wind power.

